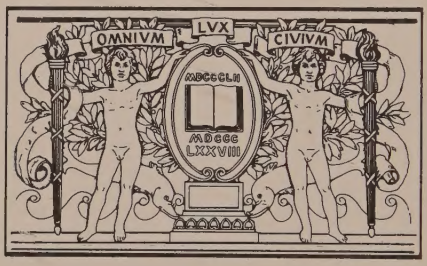
THE COMPLETE POEMS *of* FRANCIS LEDWIDGE



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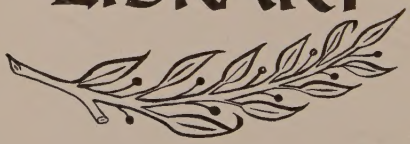

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF FRANCIS LEDWIDGE

FRANCIS LEDWIDGE

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF FRANCIS LEDWIDGE

WITH INTRODUCTIONS
BY LORD DUNSANY

NEW YORK
BRENTANO'S
1919

TO

MY MOTHER

THE FIRST SINGER I KNEW

INTRODUCTION TO SONGS OF THE FIELDS

DUNSANY CASTLE,
June, 1914.

IF one who looked from a tower for a new star, watching for years the same part of the sky, suddenly saw it (quite by chance while thinking of other things), and knew it for the star for which he had hoped, how many millions of men would never care?

And the star might blaze over deserts and forests and seas, cheering lost wanderers in desolate lands, or guiding dangerous quests; millions would never know it.

And a poet is no more than a star.

If one has arisen where I have so long looked for one, amongst the Irish peasants, it can be little more than a secret that I shall share with those who read this book because they care for poetry.

I have looked for a poet amongst the Irish peasants because it seemed to me that almost only amongst them there was in daily use a

diction worthy of poetry, as well as an imagination capable of dealing with the great and simple things that are a poet's wares. Their thoughts are in the spring-time, and all their metaphors fresh: in London no one makes metaphors any more, but daily speech is strewn thickly with dead ones that their users should write upon paper and give to their gardeners to burn.

In this same London, two years ago, where I was wasting June, I received a letter one day from Mr. Ledwidge and a very old copy-book. The letter asked whether there was any good in the verses that filled the copy-book, the produce apparently of four or five years. It began with a play in verse that no manager would dream of, there were mistakes in grammar, in spelling of course, and worse — there were such phrases as "'thwart the rolling foam," "waiting for my true love on the lea," etc., which are vulgarly considered to be the appurtenances of poetry; but out of these and many similar errors there arose continually, like a mountain sheer out of marshes, that easy fluency of shapely lines which is now so noticeable in all that he writes; that and sudden glimpses of the fields that he seems at times to bring so near to one that one exclaims, "Why,

that is how Meath looks," or "It is just like that along the Boyne in April," quite taken by surprise by familiar things: for none of us knows, till the poets point them out, how many beautiful things are close about us.

Of pure poetry there are two kinds, that which mirrors the beauty of the world in which our bodies are, and that which builds the more mysterious kingdoms where geography ends and fairyland begins, with gods and heroes at war, and the sirens singing still, and Alph going down to the darkness from Xanadu. Mr. Ledwidge gives us the first kind. When they have read through the profounder poets, and seen the problem plays, and studied all the perplexities that puzzle man in the cities, the small circle of readers that I predict for him will turn to Ledwidge as to a mirror reflecting beautiful fields, as to a very still lake rather on a very cloudless evening.

There is scarcely a smile of Spring or a sigh of Autumn that is not reflected here, scarcely a phase of the large benedictions of Summer; even of Winter he gives us clear glimpses sometimes, albeit mournfully, remembering Spring.

> "In the red west the twisted moon is low,
> And on the bubbles there are half-lit stars.

Music and twilight: and the deep blue flow
Of water: and the watching fire of Mars.
The deep fish slipping through the moonlit bars
Make death a thing of sweet dreams,—"

What a Summer's evening is here.

And this is a Summer's night in a much longer poem that I have not included in this selection, a summer's night seen by two lovers:

"The large moon rose up queenly as a flower
Charmed by some Indian pipes. A hare went by,
A snipe above them circled in the sky."

And elsewhere he writes, giving us the mood and picture of Autumn in a single line:

"And somewhere all the wandering birds have flown."

With such simple scenes as this the book is full, giving nothing at all to those that look for a "message," but bringing a feeling of quiet from gleaming Irish evenings, a book to read between the Strand and Piccadilly Circus amidst the thunder and hootings.

To every poet is given the revelation of some living thing so intimate that he speaks, when he speaks of it, as an ambassador speaking for his sovereign; with Homer it was the heroes, with Ledwidge it is the small birds that sing, but in particular especially the blackbird, whose cause he champions against all other

birds almost with a vehemence such as that with which men discuss whether Mr. ——, M.P., or his friend the Right Honourable —— is really the greater ruffian. This is how he speaks of the blackbird in one of his earliest poems; he was sixteen when he wrote it, in a grocer's shop in Dublin, dreaming of Slane, where he was born; and his dreams turned out to be too strong for the grocery business, for he walked home one night, a distance of thirty miles:

"Above me smokes the little town
With its whitewashed walls and roofs of brown
And its octagon spire toned smoothly down
As the holy minds within.
And wondrous, impudently sweet,
Half of him passion, half conceit,
The blackbird calls adown the street,
Like the piper of Hamelin."

Let us not call him the Burns of Ireland, you who may like this book, nor even the Irish John Clare, though he is more like him, for poets are all incomparable (it is only the versifiers that resemble the great ones), but let us know him by his own individual song: he is the poet of the blackbird.

I hope that not too many will be attracted to this book on account of the author being a peasant, lest he come to be praised by the how-

interesting! school; for know that neither in any class, nor in any country, nor in any age, shall you predict the footfall of Pegasus, who touches the earth where he pleaseth and is bridled by whom he will.

DUNSANY.

June, 1914.

BASINGSTOKE CAMP.

I WROTE this preface in such a different June, that if I sent it out with no addition it would make the book appear to have dropped a long while since out of another world, a world that none of us remembers now, in which there used to be leisure.

Ledwidge came last October into the 5th Battalion of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, which is in one of the divisions of Kitchener's first army, and soon earned a lance-corporal's stripe.

All his future books lie on the knees of the gods. May They not be the only readers.

Any well-informed spy can probably tell you our movements, so of such things I say nothing.

DUNSANY, *Captain,*
5th R. Inniskilling Fusiliers.

June, 1915.

INTRODUCTION TO SONGS OF PEACE

EBRINGTON BARRACKS,
September, 1916.

IN this selection that Corporal Ledwidge has asked me to make from his poems I have included "A Dream of Artemis," though it was incomplete and has been hurriedly finished. Were it not included on that account many lines of extraordinary beauty would remain unseen. He asked me if I did not think that it ended too abruptly, but so many pleasant things ended abruptly in the summer of 1914, when this poem was being written, that the blame for that may rest on a meaner, though more exalted, head than that of the poet.

In this poem, as in the other one that has a classical theme, "The Departure of Proserpine," those who remember their classics may find faults, but I read the "Dream of Artemis" merely as an expression of things that the poet has seen and dreamed in Meath, including a most beautiful description of a fox-hunt in the

north of the county, in which he has probably taken part on foot; and in "The Departure of Proserpine," whether conscious or not, a crystallization in verse of an autumnal mood induced by falling leaves and exile and the possible nearness of death.

The second poem in the book was written about a little boy who used to drive cows for some farmer past the poet's door very early every morning, whistling as he went, and who died just before the war. I think that its beautiful and spontaneous simplicity would cost some of our writers gallons of midnight oil.

Of the next, "To a Distant One," who will not hope that when, "Fame and other little things are won" its clear and confident prophecy will be happily fulfilled?

Quite perfect, if my judgment is of any value, is the little poem on page 171, "In the Mediterranean — Going to the War."

Another beautiful thing is "Homecoming" on page 188.

> "The sheep are coming home in Greece,
> Hark the bells on every hill,
> Flock by flock and fleece by fleece."

One feels that the Greeks are of some use, after all, to have inspired — with the help of their sheep — so lovely a poem.

"The Shadow People" on page 201 seems to me another perfect poem. Written in Serbia and Egypt, it shows the poet still looking steadfastly at those fields, though so far distant then, of which he was surely born to be the singer. And this devotion to the fields of Meath that, in nearly all his songs, from such far places brings his spirit home, like the instinct that has been given to the swallows, seems to be the key-note of the book. For this reason I have named it *Songs of Peace,* in spite of the circumstances under which they were written.

There follow poems at which some may wonder: "To Thomas McDonagh," "The Blackbirds," "The Wedding Morning"; but rather than attribute curious sympathies to this brave young Irish soldier I would ask his readers to consider the irresistible attraction that a lost cause has for almost any Irishman.

Once the swallow instinct appears again — in the poem called "The Lure"— and a longing for the South, and again in the poem called "Song": and then the Irish fields content him again, and we find him on the last page but one in the book making a poem for a little place called Faughan, because he finds that its hills and woods and streams are un-

sung. Surely for this if there be, as many believed, gods lesser than Those whose business is with destiny, thunder and war, small gods that haunt the groves, seen only at times by few, and then indistinctly at evening, surely from gratitude they will give him peace.

DUNSANY.

INTRODUCTION TO LAST SONGS

THE HINDENBERG LINE,
October 9th, 1917.

WRITING amidst rather too much noise and squalor to do justice at all to the delicate rustic muse of Francis Ledwidge, I do not like to delay his book any longer, nor to fail in a promise long ago made to him to write this introduction. He has gone down in that vast maelstrom into which poets do well to adventure and from which their country might perhaps be wise to withhold them, but that is our Country's affair. He has left behind him verses of great beauty, simple rural lyrics that may be something of an anodyne for this stricken age. If ever an age needed beautiful little songs our age needs them; and I know few songs more peaceful and happy, or better suited to soothe the scars on the mind of those who have looked on certain places, of which the prophecy in the gospels seems no more than

an ominous hint when it speaks of the abomination of desolation.

He told me once that it was on one particular occasion, when walking at evening through the village of Slane in summer, that he heard a blackbird sing. The notes, he said, were very beautiful, and it is this blackbird that he tells of in three wonderful lines in his early poem called "Behind the Closed Eye," and it is this song perhaps more than anything else that has been the inspiration of his brief life. Dynasties shook and the earth shook; and the war, not yet described by any man, revelled and wallowed in destruction around him; and Francis Ledwidge stayed true to his inspiration, as his homeward songs will show.

I had hoped he would have seen the fame he has well deserved; but it is hard for a poet to live to see fame even in times of peace. In these days it is harder than ever.

DUNSANY.

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SONGS OF THE FIELDS

TO MY BEST FRIEND

I LOVE the wet-lipped wind that stirs the hedge
And kisses the bent flowers that drooped for rain,
That stirs the poppy on the sun-burned ledge
And like a swan dies singing, without pain.
The golden bees go buzzing down to stain
The lilies' frills, and the blue harebell rings,
And the sweet blackbird in the rainbow sings.

Deep in the meadows I would sing a song,
The shallow brook my tuning-fork, the birds
My masters; and the boughs they hop along

Shall mark my time: but there shall be no
words
For lurking Echo's mock; an angel herds
Words that I may not know, within, for you,
Words for the faithful meet, the good and true.

BEHIND THE CLOSED EYE

I WALK the old frequented ways
That wind around the tangled braes,
I live again the sunny days
Ere I the city knew.

And scenes of old again are born,
The woodbine lassoing the thorn,
And drooping Ruth-like in the corn
The poppies weep the dew.

Above me in their hundred schools
The magpies bend their young to rules,
And like an apron full of jewels
The dewy cobweb swings.
And frisking in the stream below
The troutlets make the circles flow,

And the hungry crane doth watch them grow
As a smoker does his rings.

Above me smokes the little town,
With its whitewashed walls and roofs of brown
And its octagon spire toned smoothly down
As the holy minds within.

And wondrous impudently sweet,
Half of him passion, half conceit,
The blackbird calls adown the street
Like the piper of Hamelin.

I hear him, and I feel the lure
Drawing me back to the homely moor,
I'll go and close the mountains' door
On the city's strife and din.

BOUND TO THE MAST

When mildly falls the deluge of the grass,
And meads begin to rise like Noah's flood,
And o'er the hedgerows flow, and onward pass,
Dribbling thro' many a wood;
When hawthorn trees their flags of truce unfurl,
And dykes are spitting violets to the breeze;
When meadow larks their jocund flight will curl
From Earth's to Heaven's leas;

Ah! then the poet's dreams are most sublime,
A-sail on seas that know a heavenly calm,
And in his song you hear the river's rhyme,

And the first bleat of the lamb.

Then when the summer evenings fall serene,
Unto the country dance his songs repair,
And you may meet some maids with angel mien,
Bright eyes and twilight hair.

When Autumn's crayon tones the green leaves sere,
And breezes honed on icebergs hurry past;
When meadow-tides have ebbed and woods grow drear,
And bow before the blast;
When briars make semicircles on the way;
When blackbirds hide their flutes and cower and die;
When swollen rivers lose themselves and stray
Beneath a murky sky;

Then doth the poet's voice like cuckoo's break,
And round his verse the hungry lapwing
grieves,
And melancholy in his dreary wake
The funeral of the leaves.
Then when the Autumn dies upon the plain,
Wound in the snow alike his right and wrong,
The poet sings,— albeit a sad strain,—
Bound to the Mast of Song.

TO A LINNET IN A CAGE

WHEN Spring is in the fields that stained your
wing,
And the blue distance is alive with song,
And finny quiets of the gabbling spring
Rock lilies red and long,
At dewy daybreak, I will set you free
In ferny turnings of the woodbine lane,
Where faint-voiced echoes leave and cross in
glee
The hilly swollen plain.

In draughty houses you forget your tune,
The modulator of the changing hours,

You want the wide air of the moody noon,
And the slanting evening showers.
So I will loose you, and your song shall fall
When morn is white upon the dewy pane,
Across my eyelids, and my soul recall
From worlds of sleeping pain.

A TWILIGHT IN MIDDLE MARCH

WITHIN the oak a throb of pigeon wings
Fell silent, and grey twilight hushed the fold,
And spiders' hammocks swung on half-oped
things
That shook like foreigners upon our cold.
A gipsy lit a fire and made a sound
Of moving tins, and from an oblong moon
The river seemed to gush across the ground
To the cracked metre of a marching tune.

And then three syllables of melody
Dropped from a blackbird's flute, and died
apart
Far in the dewy dark. No more but three,

Yet sweeter music never touched a heart
Neath the blue domes of London. Flute and
reed,
Suggesting feelings of the solitude
When will was all the Delphi I would heed,
Lost like a wind within a summer wood
From little knowledge where great sorrows
brood.

SPRING

The dews drip roses on the meadows
Where the meek daisies dot the sward.
And Æolus whispers through the shadows,
"Behold the handmaid of the Lord!"
The golden news the skylark waketh
And 'thwart the heavens his flight is curled;
Attend ye as the first note breaketh
And chrism droppeth on the world.

The velvet dusk still haunts the stream
Where Pan makes music light and gay.
The mountain mist hath caught a beam
And slowly weeps itself away.

The young leaf bursts its chrysalis
And gem-like hangs upon the bough,
Where the mad throstle sings in bliss
O'er earth's rejuvenated brow.

ENVOI

Slowly fall, O golden sands,
Slowly fall and let me sing,
Wrapt in the ecstasy of youth,
The wild delights of Spring.

DESIRE IN SPRING

I LOVE the cradle songs the mothers sing
In lonely places when the twilight drops,
The slow endearing melodies that bring
Sleep to the weeping lids; and, when she stops,
I love the roadside birds upon the tops
Of dusty hedges in a world of Spring.

And when the sunny rain drips from the edge
Of midday wind, and meadows lean one way,
And a long whisper passes thro' the sedge,
Beside the broken water let me stay,
While these old airs upon my memory play,
And silent changes colour up the hedge.

A RAINY DAY IN APRIL

When the clouds shake their hyssops, and the rain
Like holy water falls upon the plain,
'Tis sweet to gaze upon the springing grain
And see your harvest born.

And sweet the little breeze of melody,
The blackbird puffs upon the budding tree,
While the wild poppy lights upon the lea
And blazes 'mid the corn.

The skylark soars the freshening shower to hail,
And the meek daisy holds aloft her pail,

And Spring all radiant by the wayside pale,
Sets up her rock and reel.

See how she weaves her mantle fold on fold,
Hemming the woods and carpeting the wold.
Her warp is of the green, her woof the gold,
The spinning world her wheel.

By'n by above the hills a pilgrim moon
Will rise to light upon the midnight noon,
But still she plieth to the lonesome tune
Of the brown meadow rail.

No heavy dreams upon her eyelids weigh,
Nor do her busy fingers ever stay;
She knows a fairy prince is on the way
To wake a sleeping beauty.

To deck the pathway that his feet must tread,
To fringe the 'broidery of the roses' bed,
To show the Summer she but sleeps,— not
dead,
This is her fixed duty.

ENVOI

To-day while leaving my dear home behind,
My eyes with salty homesick teardrops blind,
The rain fell on me sorrowful and kind
Like angels' tears of pity.

'Twas then I heard the small birds' melodies,
And saw the poppies' bonfire on the leas,
As Spring came whispering thro' the leafing
trees
Giving to me my ditty.

A SONG OF APRIL

THE censer of the eglantine was moved
By little lane winds, and the watching faces
Of garden flowerets, which of old she loved,
Peep shyly outward from their silent places.
But when the sun arose the flowers grew bolder,
And she will be in white, I thought, and she
Will have a cuckoo on her either shoulder,
And woodbine twines and fragrant wings of pea.

And I will meet her on the hills of South,
And I will lead her to a northern water,

My wild one, the sweet beautiful uncouth,

The eldest maiden of the Winter's daughter.

And down the rainbows of her noon shall slide

Lark music, and the little sunbeam people,

And nomad wings shall fill the river side,

And ground winds rocking in the lily's steeple.

THE BROKEN TRYST

THE dropping words of larks, the sweetest
tongue
That sings between the dusks, tell all of you;
The bursting white of Peace is all along
Wing-ways, and pearly droppings of the dew
Emberyl the cobwebs' greyness, and the blue
Of hiding violets, watching for your face,
Listen for you in every dusky place.

You will not answer when I call your name,
But in the fog of blossom do you hide
To change my doubts into a red-faced shame
By'n by when you are laughing by my side?

Or will you never come, or have you died,

And I in anguish have forgotten all?

And shall the world now end and the heavens

fall?

THOUGHTS AT THE TRYSTING STILE

Come, May, and hang a white flag on each
thorn,
Make truce with earth and heaven; the April
child
Now hides her sulky face deep in the morn
Of your new flowers by the water wild
And in the ripples of the rising grass,
And rushes bent to let the south wind pass
On with her tumult of swift nomad wings,
And broken domes of downy dandelion.
Only in spasms now the blackbird sings.
The hour is all a-dream.
Nets of woodbine
Throw woven shadows over dreaming flowers,

And dreaming, a bee-luring lily bends
Its tender bell where blue dyke-water cowers
Thro' briars, and folded ferns, and gripping
ends
Of wild convolvulus.
The lark's sky-way
Is desolate.
I watch an apple-spray
Beckon across a wall as if it knew
I wait the calling of the orchard maid.

Inly I feel that she will come in blue,
With yellow on her hair, and two curls strayed
Out of her comb's loose stocks, and I shall
steal
Behind and lay my hands upon her eyes,
"Look not, but be my Psyche!"

And her peal
Of laughter will ring far, and as she tries
For freedom I will call her names of flowers
That climb up walls; then thro' the twilight hours
We'll talk about the loves of ancient queens,
And kisses like wasp-honey, false and sweet,
And how we are entangled in love's snares
Like wind-looped flowers.

EVENING IN MAY

THERE is nought tragic here, tho' night uplifts
A narrow curtain where the footlights burned,
But one long act where Love each bold heart sifts
And blushes in the dark, but has not spurned
The strong resolve of noon. The maiden's head
Is brown upon the shoulder of her youth,
Hearts are exchanged, long pent up words are said,
Blushes burn out at the long tale of truth.

The blackbird blows his yellow flute so strong,
And rolls away the notes in careless glee,

It breaks the rhythm of the thrushes' song,
And puts red shame upon his rivalry.
The yellowhammers on the roof tiles beat
Sweet little dulcimers to broken time,
And here the robin with a heart replete
Has all in one short plagiariséd rhyme.

AN ATTEMPT AT A CITY SUNSET

(TO J. K. Q.)

THERE was a quiet glory in the sky
When thro' the gables sank the large red sun,
And toppling mounts of rugged cloud went by
Heavy with whiteness, and the moon had won
Her way above the woods, with her small star
Behind her like the cuckoo's little mother. . . .
It was the hour when visions from some far
Strange Eastern dreams like twilight bats take
wing
Out of the ruin of memories.
O brother
Of high song, wand'ring where the Muses fling

Rich gifts as prodigal as winter rain,
Like stepping-stones within a swollen river
The hidden words are sounding in my brain,
Too wild for taming; and I must for ever
Think of the hills upon the wilderness,
And leave the city sunset to your song.
For there I am a stranger like the trees
That sigh upon the traffic all day long.

WAITING

A STRANGE old woman on the wayside sate,
Looked far away and shook her head and
sighed.
And when anon, close by, a rusty gate
Loud on the warm winds cried,
She lifted up her eyes and said, "You're late."
Then shook her head and sighed.

And evening found her thus, and night in state
Walked thro' the starlight, and a heavy tide
Followed the yellow moon around her wait,
And morning walked in wide.
She lifted up her eyes and said, "You're late."
Then shook her head and sighed.

THE SINGER'S MUSE

I BROUGHT in these to make her kitchen sweet,
Haw blossoms and the roses of the lane.
Her heart seemed in her eyes so wild they beat
With welcome for the boughs of Spring again.
She never heard of Babylon or Troy,
She read no book, but once saw Dublin town;
Yet she made a poet of her servant boy
And from Parnassus earned the laurel crown.

If Fame, the Gorgon, turns me into stone
Upon some city square, let someone place
Thorn blossoms and lane roses newly blown
Beside my feet, and underneath them trace:

" His heart was like a bookful of girls' song,
With little loves and mighty Care's alloy.
These did he bring his muse, and suffered long,
Her bashful singer and her servant boy."

INAMORATA

The bees were holding levees in the flowers,
Do you remember how each puff of wind
Made every wing a hum? My hand in yours
Was listening to your heart, but now
The glory is all faded, and I find
No more the olden mystery of the hours
When you were lovely and our hearts would bow
Each to the will of each, but one bright day
Is stretching like an isthmus in a bay
From the glad years that I have left behind.

I look across the edge of things that were
And you are lovely in the April ways,

Holy and mute, the sigh of my despair. . . .
I hear once more the linnets' April tune
Beyond the rainbow's warp, as in the days
You brought me facefuls of your smiles to
share
Some of your new-found wonders. . . . Oh
when soon
I'm wandering the wide seas for other lands,
Sometimes remember me with folded hands,
And keep me happy in your pious prayer.

THE WIFE OF LLEW

And Gwydion said to Math, when it was
Spring:
"Come now and let us make a wife for Llew."
And so they broke broad boughs yet moist
with dew,
And in a shadow made a magic ring:
They took the violet and the meadow-sweet
To form her pretty face, and for her feet
They built a mound of daisies on a wing,
And for her voice they made a linnet sing
In the wide poppy blowing for her mouth.
And over all they chanted twenty hours.
And Llew came singing from the azure south
And bore away his wife of birds and flowers.

THE HILLS

The hills are crying from the fields to me,
And calling me with music from a choir
Of waters in their woods where I can see
The bloom unfolded on the whins like fire.
And, as the evening moon climbs ever higher
And blots away the shadows from the slope,
They cry to me like things devoid of hope.

Pigeons are home. Day droops. The fields
are cold.
Now a slow wind comes labouring up the sky
With a small cloud long steeped in sunset gold,
Like Jason with the precious fleece anigh
The harbour of Iolcos. Day's bright eye

Is filmed with the twilight, and the rill
Shines like a scimitar upon the hill.

And moonbeams drooping thro' the coloured
wood
Are full of little people wingéd white.
I'll wander thro' the moon-pale solitude
That calls across the intervening night
With river voices at their utmost height,
Sweet as rain-water in the blackbird's flute
That strikes the world in admiration mute.

JUNE

Broom out the floor now, lay the fender by,
And plant this bee-sucked bough of woodbine there,
And let the window down. The butterfly
Floats in upon the sunbeam, and the fair
Tanned face of June, the nomad gipsy, laughs
Above her widespread wares, the while she tells
The farmers' fortunes in the fields, and quaffs
The water from the spider-peopled wells.

The hedges are all drowned in green grass seas,
And bobbing poppies flare like Elmor's light,

While siren-like the pollen-stainéd bees
Drone in the clover depths. And up the height
The cuckoo's voice is hoarse and broke with joy.
And on the lowland crops the crows make raid,
Nor fear the clappers of the farmer's boy,
Who sleeps, like drunken Noah, in the shade.

And loop this red rose in that hazel ring
That snares your little ear, for June is short
And we must joy in it and dance and sing,
And from her bounty draw her rosy worth.
Ay! soon the swallows will be flying south,
The wind wheel north to gather in the snow,
Even the roses spilt on youth's red mouth
Will soon blow down the road all roses go.

IN MANCHESTER

THERE is a noise of feet that move in sin
Under the side-faced moon here where I stray,
Want by me like a Nemesis. The din
Of noon is in my ears, but far away
My thoughts are, where Peace shuts the black-
birds' wings
And it is cherry time by all the springs.

And this same moon floats like a trail of fire
Down the long Boyne, and darts white arrows
thro'
The mill wood; her white skirt is on the weir,
She walks thro' crystal mazes of the dew,

And rests awhile upon the dewy slope
Where I will hope again the old, old hope.

With wandering we are worn my muse and I,
And, if I sing, my song knows nought of mirth.
I often think my soul is an old lie
In sackcloth, it repents so much of birth.
But I will build it yet a cloister home
Near the peace of lakes when I have ceased to roam.

MUSIC ON WATER

WHERE does Remembrance weep when we
forget?
From whither brings she back an old delight?
Why do we weep that once we laughed? and
yet
Why are we sad that once our hearts were
light?
I sometimes think the days that we made
bright
Are damned within us, and we hear them yell,
Deep in the solitude of that wide hell,
Because we welcome in some new regret.
I will remember with sad heart next year

This music and this water, but to-day
Let me be part of all this joy. My ear
Caught far-off music which I bid away,
The light of one fair face that fain would stay
Upon the heart's broad canvas, as the Face
On Mary's towel, lighting up the place.
Too sad for joy, too happy for a tear.

Methinks I see the music like a light
Low on the bobbing water, and the fields
Yellow and brown alternate on the height,
Hanging in silence there like battered shields,
Lean forward heavy with their coloured yields
As if they paid it homage; and the strains,
Prisoners of Echo, up the sunburnt plains
Fade on the cross-cut to a future night.
In the red West the twisted moon is low,

And on the bubbles there are half-lit stars:
Music and twilight: and the deep blue flow
Of water: and the watching fire of Mars:
The deep fish slipping thro' the moonlit bars
Make Death a thing of sweet dreams, life a
mock.
And the soul patient by the heart's loud clock
Watches the time, and thinks it wondrous slow.

TO M. McG.

(WHO CAME ONE DAY WHEN WE WERE ALL GLOOMY AND CHEERED US WITH SAD MUSIC)

We were all sad and could not weep,
Because our sorrow had not tears:
You came a silent thing like Sleep,
And stole away our fears.

Old memories knocking at each heart
Troubled us with the world's great lie:
You sat a little way apart
And made a fiddle cry.

And April with her sunny showers
Came laughing up the fields again:
White wings went flashing thro' the hours
So lately full of pain.

And rivers full of little lights
Came down the fields of waving green:
Our immemorial delights
Stole in on us unseen.

For this may Good Luck let you loose
Upon her treasures many years,
And Peace unfurl her flag of truce
To any threat'ning fears.

IN THE DUSK

Day hangs its light between two dusks, my heart,
Always beyond the dark there is the blue.
Sometime we'll leave the dark, myself and you,
And revel in the light for evermore.
But the deep pain of you is aching smart,
And a long calling weighs upon you sore.

Day hangs its light between two dusks, and song
Is there at the beginning and the end.

You, in the singing dusk, how could you wend
The songless way Contentment fleetly wings?
But in the dark your beauty shall be strong,
Tho' only one should listen how it sings.

THE DEATH OF AILILL

WHEN there was heard no more the war's loud
sound,
And only the rough corn-crake filled the hours,
And hill winds in the furze and drowsy flowers,
Maeve in her chamber with her white head
bowed
On Ailill's heart was sobbing: "I have found
The way to love you now," she said, and he
Winked an old tear away and said: "The
proud
Unyielding heart loves never." And then she:
"I love you now, tho' once when we were
young

We walked apart like two who were estranged
Because I loved you not, now all is changed."
And he who loved her always called her name
And said: "You do not love me, 'tis your
tongue
Talks in the dusk; you love the blazing gold
Won in the battles, and the soldier's fame.
You love the stories that are often told
By poets in the hall." Then Maeve arose
And sought her daughter Findebar: "O,
child,
Go tell your father that my love went wild
With all my wars in youth, and say that now
I love him stronger than I hate my foes. . . ."
And Findebar unto her father sped
And touched him gently on the rugged brow,
And knew by the cold touch that he was dead.

AUGUST

She'll come at dusky first of day,
White over yellow harvest's song.
Upon her dewy rainbow way
She shall be beautiful and strong.
The lidless eye of noon shall spray
Tan on her ankles in the hay,
Shall kiss her brown the whole day long.

I'll know her in the windrows, tall
Above the crickets of the hay.
I'll know her when her odd eyes fall,
One May-blue, one November-grey.
I'll watch her from the red barn wall
Take down her rusty scythe, and call,
And I will follow her away.

THE VISITATION OF PEACE

I CLOSED the book of verse where Sorrow wept
Above Love's broken fane where Hope once prayed,
And thought of old trysts broken and trysts kept
Only to chide my fondness. Then I strayed
Down a green coil of lanes where murmuring wings
Moved up and down like lights upon the sea,
Searching for calm amid untroubled things
Of wood and water. The industrious bee
Sang in his barn within the hollow beech,
And in a distant haggard a loud mill

Hummed like a war of hives. A whispered
speech
Of corn and wind was on the yellow hill,
And tattered scarecrows nodded their assent
And waved their arms like orators. The brown
Nude beauty of the Autumn sweetly bent
Over the woods, across the little town.

I sat in a retreating shade beside
The river, where it fell across a weir
Like a white mane, and in a flourish wide
Roars by an island field and thro' a tier
Of leaning sallies, like an avenue
When the moon's flambeau hunts the shadows
out
And strikes the borders white across the dew.
Where little ringlets ended, the fleet trout

Fed on the water moths. A marsh hen crossed
On flying wings and swimming feet to where
Her mate was in the rushes forest, tossed
On the heaving dusk like swallows in the air.

Beyond the river a walled rood of graves
Hung dead with all its hemlock wan and sere,
Save where the wall was broken and long waves
Of yellow grass flowed outward like a weir,
As if the dead were striving for more room
And their old places in the scheme of things;
For sometimes the thought comes that the brown tomb
Is not the end of all our labourings,
But we are born once more of wind and rain,
To sow the world with harvest young and strong,

That men may live by men 'til the stars wane,
And still sweet music fill the blackbird's song.

But O for truths about the soul denied.
Shall I meet Keats in some wild isle of balm,
Dreaming beside a tarn where green and wide
Boughs of sweet cinnamon protect the calm
Of the dark water? And together walk
Thro' hills with dimples full of water where
White angels rest, and all the dead years talk
About the changes of the earth? Despair
Sometimes takes hold of me but yet I hope
To hope the old hope in the better times
When I am free to cast aside the rope
That binds me to all sadness 'til my rhymes
Cry like lost birds. But O, if I should die
Ere this millennium, and my hands be crossed

Under the flowers I loved, the passers-by
Shall scowl at me as one whose soul is lost.

But a soft peace came to me when the West
Shut its red door and a thin streak of moon
Was twisted on the twilight's dusky breast.
It wrapped me up as sometimes a sweet tune
Heard for the first time wraps the scenes around,
That we may have their memories when some hand
Strikes it in other times and hopes unbound
Rising see clear the everlasting land.

BEFORE THE TEARS

You looked as sad as an eclipséd moon
Above the sheaves of harvest, and there lay
A light lisp on your tongue, and very soon
The petals of your deep blush fell away;
White smiles that come with an uneasy grace
From inner sorrow crossed your forehead fair,
When the wind passing took your scattered hair
And flung it like a brown shower in my face.

Tear-fringéd winds that fill the heart's low sighs
And never break upon the bosom's pain,

But blow unto the windows of the eyes
Their misty promises of silver rain,
Around your loud heart ever rose and fell.
I thought 'twere better that the tears should
come
And strike your every feeling wholly numb,
So thrust my hand in yours and shook fare-
well.

GOD'S REMEMBRANCE

THERE came a whisper from the night to me
Like music of the sea, a mighty breath
From out the valley's dewy mouth, and Death
Shook his lean bones, and every coloured tree
Wept in the fog of morning. From the town
Of nests among the branches one old crow
With gaps upon his wings flew far away.
And, thinking of the golden summer glow,
I heard a blackbird whistle half his lay
Among the spinning leaves that slanted down.

And I who am a thought of God's now long
Forgotten in His Mind, and desolate

With other dreams long over, as a gate
Singing upon the wind the anvil song,
Sang of the Spring when first He dreamt of me
In that old town all hills and signs that creak: —
And He remembered me as something far
In old imaginations, something weak
With distance, like a little sparking star
Drowned in the lavender of evening sea.

AN OLD PAIN

WHAT old, old pain is this that bleeds anew?
What old and wandering dream forgotten long
Hobbles back to my mind? With faces two,
Like Janus of old Rome, I look about,
And yet discover not what ancient wrong
Lies unrequited still. No speck of doubt
Upon to-morrow's promise. Yet a pain
Of some dumb thing is on me, and I feel
How men go mad, how faculties do reel
When these old querns turn round within the
brain.

'Tis something to have known one day of joy,
Now to remember when the heart is low,

An antidote of thought that will destroy
The asp bite of Regret. Deep will I drink
By'n by the purple cups that overflow,
And fill the shattered heart's urn to the brink.
But some are dead who laughed! Some scattered are
Around the sultry breadth of foreign zones.
You, with the warm clay wrapt about your bones,
Are nearer to me than the live afar.

My heart has grown as dry as an old crust,
Deep in book lumber and moth-eaten wood,
So long it has forgot the old love lust,
So long forgot the thing that made youth dear,
Two blue love lamps, a heart exceeding good,

And how, when first I heard that voice ring clear
Among the sering hedges of the plain,
I knew not which from which beyond the corn,
The laughter by the callow twisted thorn,
The jay-thrush whistling in the haws for rain.

I hold the mind is the imprisoned soul,
And all our aspirations are its own
Struggles and strivings for a golden goal,
That wear us out like snow men at the thaw.
And we shall make our Heaven where we have sown
Our purple longings. Oh! can the loved dead draw
Anear us when we moan, or watching wait
Our coming in the woods where first we met,

The dead leaves falling on their wild hair wet,
Their hands upon the fastenings of the gate?

This is the old, old pain come home once more,
Bent down with answers wild and very lame
For all my delving in old dog-eared lore
That drove the Sages mad. And boots the world
Aught for their wisdom? I have asked them, tame,
And watched the Earth by its own self be hurled
Atom by atom into nothingness,
Loll out of the deep canyons, drops of fire,
And kindle on the hills its funeral pyre,
And all we learn but shows we know the less.

THE LOST ONES

Somewhere is music from the linnets' bills,
And thro' the sunny flowers the bee-wings drone,
And white bells of convolvulus on hills
Of quiet May make silent ringing, blown
Hither and thither by the wind of showers,
And somewhere all the wandering birds have flown;
And the brown breath of Autumn chills the flowers.

But where are all the loves of long ago?
Oh, little twilight ship blown up the tide,

Where are the faces laughing in the glow
Of morning years, the lost ones scattered wide?
Give me your hand, Oh brother, let us go
Crying about the dark for those who died.

ALL-HALLOWS EVE

THE dreadful hour is sighing for a moon
To light old lovers to the place of tryst,
And old footsteps from blessed acres soon
On old known pathways will be lightly prest;
And winds that went to eavesdrop since the noon,
Kinking [1] at some old tale told sweetly brief,
Will give a cowslick [2] to the yarrow leaf,[3]
And sling the round nut from the hazel down.

[1] Provincially a kind of laughter.

[2] A curl of hair thrown back from the forehead: used metaphorically here, and itself a metaphor taken from the curl of a cow's tongue.

[3] Maidens on Hallows Eve pull leaves of yarrow, and, saying over them certain words, put them under their pillows and so dream of their true-loves.

And there will be old yarn balls,[1] and old spells
In broken lime-kilns, and old eyes will peer
For constant lovers in old spidery wells,[2]
And old embraces will grow newly dear.
And some may meet old lovers in old dells,
And some in doors ajar in towns light-lorn;—
But two will meet beneath a gnarly thorn
Deep in the bosom of the windy fells.

Then when the night slopes home and white-faced day
Yawns in the east there will be sad fare-wells;

[1] They also throw balls of yarn (which must be black) over their left shoulders into old lime-kilns, holding one end and then winding it in till they feel it somehow caught, and expect to see in the darkness the face of their lover.

[2] Also they look for his face in old wells.

And many feet will tap a lonely way
Back to the comfort of their chilly cells,
And eyes will backward turn and long to stay
Where love first found them in the clover bloom —
But one will never seek the lonely tomb,
And two will linger at the tryst alway.

A MEMORY

Low sounds of night that drip upon the ear,
The pluméd lapwing's cry, the curlew's call,
Clear in the far dark heard, a sound as drear
As raindrops pelted from a nodding rush
To give a white wink once and broken fall
Into a deep dark pool: they pain the hush,
As if the fiery meteor's slanting lance
Had found their empty craws: they fill with
sound
The silence, with the merry round,
The sounding mazes of a last year's dance.

I thought to watch the stars come spark by
spark
Out on the muffled night, and watch the moon
Go round the full, and turn upon the dark,
And sharpen towards the new, and waiting
watch
The grand Kaleidoscope of midnight noon
Change colours on the dew, where high hills
notch
The low and moony sky. But who dare cast
One brief hour's horoscope, whose tunéd ear
Makes every sound the music of last year?
Whose hopes are built up in the door of Past?

No, not more silent does the spider stitch
A cobweb on the fern, nor fogdrops fall
On sheaves of harvest when the night is rich

With moonbeams, than the spirits of delight
Walk the dark passages of Memory's hall.
We feel them not, but in the wastes of night
We hear their low-voiced mediums, and we rise
To wrestle old Regrets, to see old faces,
To meet and part in old tryst-trodden places
With breaking heart, and emptying of eyes.

I feel the warm hand on my shoulder light,
I hear the music of a voice that words
The slow time of the feet, I see the white
Arms slanting, and the dimples fold and
fill. . . .
I hear wing-flutters of the early birds,
I see the tide of morning landward spill,
The cloaking maidens, hear the voice that tells
"You'd never know" and "Soon perhaps
again,"

With white teeth biting down the inly pain,
Then sounds of going away and sad farewells.

A year ago! It seems but yesterday.
Yesterday! And a hundred years! All one.
'Tis laid a something finished, dark, away,
To gather mould upon the shelves of Time.
What matters hours or æons when 'tis gone?
And yet the heart will dust it of its grime,
And hover round it in a silver spell,
Be lost in it and cry aloud in fear;
And like a lost soul in a pious ear,
Hammer in mine a never easy bell.

A SONG

My heart has flown on wings to you, away
In the lonely places where your footsteps lie
Full up of stars when the short showers of day
Have passed like ancient sorrows. I would fly
To your green solitude of woods to hear
You singing in the sounds of leaves and birds;
But I am sad below the depth of words
That nevermore we two shall draw anear.

Had I but wealth of land and bleating flocks
And barnfuls of the yellow harvest yield,
And a large house with climbing hollyhocks
And servant maidens singing in the field,

You'd love me; but I own no roaming herds,

My only wealth is songs of love for you,

And now that you are lost I may pursue

A sad life deep below the depth of words.

A FEAR

I ROAMED the woods to-day and seemed to hear,
As Dante heard, the voice of suffering trees.
The twisted roots seemed bare contorted knees,
The bark was full of faces strange with fear.

I hurried home still wrapt in that dark spell,
And all the night upon the world's great lie
I pondered, and a voice seemed whisp'ring nigh,
"You died long since, and all this thing is hell!"

THE COMING POET

" Is it far to the town? " said the poet,
As he stood 'neath the groaning vane,
And the warm lights shimmered silver
On the skirts of the windy rain.
" There are those who call me," he pleaded,
" And I'm wet and travel sore."
But nobody spoke from the shelter,
And he turned from the bolted door.

And they wait in the town for the poet
With stones at the gates, and jeers,
But away on the wolds of distance
In the blue of a thousand years

He sleeps with the age that knows him,

In the clay of the unborn, dead,

Rest at his weary insteps,

Fame at his crumbled head.

THE VISION ON THE BRINK

To-NIGHT when you sit in the deep hours alone,
And from the sleeps you snatch wake quick and feel
You hear my step upon the threshold-stone,
My hand upon the doorway latchward steal,
Be sure 'tis but the white winds of the snow,
For I shall come no more.

And when the candle in the pane is wore,
And moonbeams down the hill long shadows throw,
When night's white eyes are in the chinky door,

Think of a long road in a valley low,
Think of a wanderer in the distance far,
Lost like a voice among the scattered hills.

And when the moon has gone and ocean spills
Its waters backward from the trysting bar,
And in dark furrows of the night there tills
A jewelled plough, and many a falling star
Moves you to prayer, then will you think of me
On the long road that will not ever end.

Jonah is hoarse in Nineveh — I'd lend
My voice to save the town — and hurriedly
Goes Abraham with murdering knife, and Ruth
Is weary in the corn. . . . Yet will I stay,
For one flower blooms upon the rocks of truth,
God is in all our hurry and delay.

TO LORD DUNSANY

(ON HIS RETURN FROM EAST AFRICA)

For you I knit these lines, and on their ends
Hang little tossing bells to ring you home.
The music is all cracked, and Poesy tends
To richer blooms than mine; but you who roam
Thro' coloured gardens of the highest muse,
And leave the door ajar sometimes that we
May steal small breathing things of reds and blues
And things of white sucked empty by the bee,
Will listen to this bunch of bells from me.
My cowslips ring you welcome to the land

Your muse brings honour to in many a tongue,
Not only that I long to clasp your hand,
But that you're missed by poets who have sung
And viewed with doubt the music of their verse
All the long winter, for you love to bring
The true note in and say the wise thing terse,
And show what birds go lame upon a wing,
And where the weeds among the flowers do
spring.

ON AN OATEN STRAW

My harp is out of tune, and so I take
An oaten straw some shepherd dropped of old.
It is the hour when Beauty doth awake
With trembling limbs upon the dewy cold.
And shapes of green show where the woolly fold
Slept in the winding shelter of the brake.

This I will pipe for you, how all the year
The one I love like Beauty takes her way.
Wrapped in the wind of winter she doth cheer
The loud woods like a sunbeam of the May.
This I will pipe for you the whole blue day
Seated with Pan upon the mossy weir.

EVENING IN FEBRUARY

The windy evening drops a grey
Old eyelid down across the sun,
The last crow leaves the ploughman's way,
And happy lambs make no more fun.

Wild parsley buds beside my feet,
A doubtful thrush makes hurried tune,
The steeple in the village street
Doth seem to pierce the twilight moon.

I hear and see those changing charms,
For all — my thoughts are fixed upon
The hurry and the loud alarms
Before the fall of Babylon.

THE SISTER

I saw the little quiet town,
And the whitewashed gables on the hill,
And laughing children coming down
The laneway to the mill.

Wind-blushes up their faces glowed,
And they were happy as could be,
The wobbling water never flowed
So merry and so free.

One little maid withdrew aside
To pick a pebble from the sands.
Her golden hair was long and wide,
And there were dimples on her hands.

And when I saw her large blue eyes,

What was the pain that went thro' me?

Why did I think on Southern skies

And ships upon the sea?

BEFORE THE WAR OF COOLEY

At daybreak Maeve rose up from where she
prayed
And took her prophetess across her door
To gaze upon her hosts. Tall spear and blade
Burnished for early battle dimly shook
The morning's colours, and then Maeve said:
"Look
And tell me how you see them now."
And then
The woman that was lean with knowledge said:
"There's crimson on them, and there's drip-
ping red."
And a tall soldier galloped up the glen

With foam upon his boot, and halted there
Beside old Maeve. She said, "Not yet," and turned
Into her blazing dun, and knelt in prayer
One solemn hour, and once again she came
And sought her prophetess. With voice that mourned,
"How do you see them now?" she asked.
"All lame
And broken in the noon." And once again
The soldier stood before her.
"No, not yet."
Maeve answered his inquiring look and turned
Once more unto her prayer, and yet once more
"How do you see them now?" she asked.
"All wet
With storm rains, and all broken, and all tore

With midnight wolves." And when the soldier came

Maeve said, "It is the hour." There was a flash

Of trumpets in the dim, a silver flame

Of rising shields, loud words passed down the ranks,

And twenty feet they saw the lances leap.

They passed the dun with one short noisy dash.

And turning proud Maeve gave the wise one thanks,

And sought her chamber in the dun to weep.

LOW-MOON LAND

I OFTEN look when the moon is low
Thro' that other window on the wall,
At a land all beautiful under snow,
Blotted with shadows that come and go
When the winds rise up and fall.
And the form of a beautiful maid
In the white silence stands,
And beckons me with her hands.

And when the cares of the day are laid,
Like sacred things, in the mart away,
I dream of the low-moon land and the maid
Who will not weary of waiting, or jade

Of calling to me for aye.

And I would go if I knew the sea

That lips the shore where the moon is low,

For a longing is on me that will not go.

THE SORROW OF FINDEBAR

"WHY do you sorrow, child? There is loud
cheer
In the wide halls, and poets red with wine
Tell of your eyebrows and your tresses long,
And pause to let your royal mother hear
The brown bull low amid her silken kine.
And you who are the harpstring and the song
Weep like a memory born of some old pain."

And Findebar made answer, "I have slain
More than Cuculain's sword, for I have been
The promised meed of every warrior brave
In Tain Bo Cualigne wars, and I am sad
As is the red banshee that goes to keen

Above the wet dark of the deep brown grave,
For the warm loves that made my memory
glad."

And her old nurse bent down and took a wild
Curl from her eye and hung it on her ear,
And said, "The woman at the heavy quern,
Who weeps that she will never bring a child,
And sees her sadness in the coming year,
Will roll up all her beauty like a fern;
Not you, whose years stretch purple to the
end."

And Findebar, "Beside the broad blue bend
Of the slow river where the dark banks slope
Wide to the woods sleeps Ferdia apart.

I loved him, and then drove him for pride's
sake
To early death, and now I have no hope,
For mine is Maeve's proud heart, Ailill's kind
heart,
And that is why it pines and will not break."

ON DREAM WATER

And so, o'er many a league of sea
We sang of those we left behind.
Our ship split thro' the phosphor free,
Her white sails pregnant with the wind,
And I was wondering in my mind
How many would remember me.

Then red-edged dawn expanded wide,
A stony foreland stretched away,
And bowed capes gathering round the tide
Kept many a little homely bay.
O joy of living there for aye,
O Soul so often tried!

THE DEATH OF SUALTEM

After the brown bull passed from Cooley's
fields
And all Muirevne was a wail of pain,
Sualtem came at evening thro' the slain
And heard a noise like water rushing loud,
A thunder like the noise of mighty shields.
And in his dread he shouted: "Earth is bowed,
The heavens are split and stars make war with
stars
And the sea runs in fear!"
For all his scars
He hastened to Dun Dealgan, and there found
It was his son, Curculain, making moan.

His hair was red with blood and he was wound
In wicker full of grass, and a cold stone
Was on his head.

"Cuculain, is it so?"
Sualtem said, and then, "My hair is snow,
My strength leaks thro' my wounds, but I will
die
Avenging you."

And then Cuculain said:
"Not so, old father, but take horse and ride
To Emain Macha, and tell Connor this."
Sualtem from his red lips took a kiss,
And turned the stone upon Cuculain's head.
The Lia-Macha with a heavy sigh
Ran up and halted by his wounded side.

In Emain Macha to low lights and song
Connor was dreaming of the beauteous Maeve.
He saw her as at first, by Shannon's wave,
Her insteps in the water, mounds of white.
It was in Spring, and music loud and strong
Rocked all the coloured woods, and the blue
height
Of heaven was round the lark, and in his heart
There was a pain of love.
Then with a start
He wakened as a loud voice from below
Shouted, "The land is robbed, the women
shamed,
The children stolen, and Curculain low!"
Then Connor rose, his war-worn soul inflamed,
And shouted down for Cathbad; then to greet
The messenger he hurried to the street.

And there he saw Sualtem shouting still
The message of Muirevne 'mid the sound
Of hurried bucklings and uneasy horse.
At sight of him the Lia-Macha wheeled,
So that Sualtem fell upon his shield,
And his grey head came shouting to the ground.
They buried him by moonlight on the hill,
And all about him waves the heavy gorse.

THE MAID IN LOW-MOON LAND

I KNOW not where she be, and yet
I see her waiting white and tall.
Her eyes are blue, her lips are wet,
And move as tho' they'd love to call.
I see her shadow on the wall
Before the changing moon has set.

She stands there lovely and alone
And up her porch blue creepers swing.
The world she moves in is her own,
To sun and shade and hasty wing.
And I would wed her in the Spring,
But only I sit here and moan.

THE DEATH OF LEAG, CUCHULAIN'S CHARIOTEER

CONALL

"I ONLY heard the loud ebb on the sand,
The high ducks talking in the chilly sky.
The voices that you fancied floated by
Were wind notes, or the whisper on the trees.
But you are still so full of war's red din,
You hear impatient hoof-beats up the land
When the sea's changing, or a lisping breeze
Is playing on the waters of the linn."

LEAG

"I hear Cuchulain's voice, and Emer's voice,
The Lia Macha's neigh, the chariot's wheels,

Farther away a bell bough's drowsy peals;
And sleep lays heavy thumbs upon my eyes.
I hear Cuchulain sing above the chime
Of One Who comes to make the world rejoice,
And comes again to blot away the skies,
To wipe away the world and roll up Time."

CONALL

" In the dark ground forever mouth to mouth
They kiss thro' all the changes of the world,
The grey sea fogs above them are unfurled
At evening when the sea walks with the moon,
And peace is with them in the long cairn shut.
You loved him as the swallow loves the South,
And Love speaks with you since the evening put
Mist and white dews upon short shadowed noon."

LEAG

" Sleep lays his heavy thumbs upon my eyes,
Shuts out all sounds and shakes me at the
wrists.
By Nanny water where the salty mists
Weep o'er Riángabra let me stand deep
Beside my father. Sleep lays heavy thumbs
Upon my eyebrows, and I hear the sighs
Of far loud waters, and a troop that comes
With boughs of bells ——"

CONALL

" They come to you with sleep."

THE PASSING OF CAOILTE

'Twas just before the truce sang thro' the din
Caoilte, the thin man, at the war's red end
Leaned from the crooked ranks and saw his friend
Fall in the farther fury; so when truce
Halted advancing spears the thin man came
And bending by pale Oscar called his name;
And then he knew of all who followed Finn,
He only felt the cool of Gavra's dews.

And Caoilte, the thin man, went down the field
To where slow water moved among the whins,
And sat above a pool of twinkling fins

To court old memories of the Fenian men,
Of how Finn's laugh at Conan's tale of glee
Brought down the rowan's boughs on Knocnaree,
And how he made swift comets with his shield
At moonlight in the Fomar's rivered glen.

And Caolite, the thin man, was weary now,
And nodding in short sleeps of half a dream:
There came a golden barge down middle stream,
And a tall maiden coloured like a bird
Pulled noiseless oars, but not a word she said.
And Caoilte, the thin man, raised up his head
And took her kiss upon his throbbing brow,
And where they went away what man has heard?

GROWING OLD

We'll fill a Provence bowl and pledge us deep
The memory of the far ones, and between
The soothing pipes, in heavy-lidded sleep,
Perhaps we'll dream the things that once have been.
'Tis only noon and still too soon to die,
Yet we are growing old, my heart and I.

A hundred books are ready in my head
To open out where Beauty bent a leaf.
What do we want with Beauty? We are wed
Like ancient Proserpine to dismal grief.

And we are changing with the hours that fly,
And growing odd and old, my heart and I.

Across a bed of bells the river flows,
And roses dawn, but not for us; we want
The new thing ever as the old thing grows
Spectral and weary on the hills we haunt.
And that is why we feast, and that is why
We're growing odd and old, my heart and I.

AFTER MY LAST SONG

WHERE I shall rest when my last song is over
The air is smelling like a feast of wine;
And purple breakers of the windy clover
Shall roll to cool this burning brow of mine;
And there shall come to me, when day is told
The peace of sleep when I am grey and old.

I'm wild for wandering to the far-off places
Since one forsook me whom I held most dear.
I want to see new wonders and new faces
Beyond East seas; but I will win back here
When my last song is sung, and veins are cold
As thawing snow, and I am grey and old.

Oh paining eyes, but not with salty weeping,
My heart is like a sod in winter rain;
Ere you will see those baying waters leaping
Like hungry hounds once more, how many a pain
Shall heal; but when my last short song is trolled
You'll sleep here on wan cheeks grown thin and old.

SONGS OF PEACE
AT HOME

A DREAM OF ARTEMIS

THERE was soft beauty on the linnet's tongue
To see the rainbow's coloured bands arch wide.
The thunder darted his red fangs among
South mountains, but the East was like a bride
Drest for the altar at her mother's door
Weeping between two loves. The fields were pied
With May's munificence of flowers, that wore
The fashion of the days when Eve was young,
God's kirtles, ere the first sweet summer died.
The blackbird in a thorn of waving white
Sang bouquets of small tunes that bid me turn
From twilight wanderings thro' some old delight
I heard in my far memory making mourn.

Such music fills me with a joy half pain,
And beats a track across my life I spurn
In sober moments. Ah, this wandering brain
Could play its hurdy-gurdy all the night
To vagrant joys of days beyond the bourn.

I heard the river warble sweetly nigh
To meet the warm salt tide below the weir,
And saw a coloured line of cows pass by,—
And then a voice said quickly, "Iris here!"
"What message now hath Hera?" then I
woke,
An exile in Arcadia, and a spear
Flashed by me, and ten nymphs fleet-footed
broke
Out of the coppice with a silver cry,
Into the bow of lights to disappear.

For one blue minute then there was no sound
Save water-noise, slow round a rushy bend,
And bird-delight, and ripples on the ground
Of windy flowers that swelling would ascend
The coloured hill and break all beautiful
And, falling backwards, to the woods would send
The full tide of their love. What soft moons pull
Their moving fragrance? did I ask, and found
Sad Io in far Egypt met a friend.—
It was my body thought so, far away
In the grey future, not the wild bird tied
That is the wandering soul. Behind the day
We may behold thee, soft one, hunted wide
By the loud gadfly; but the truant soul
Knows thee before thou lay by night's dark side,

Wed to the dimness; long before its dole
Was meted it, to be thus pound in clay
That daubs its whiteness and offends its pride.

There were loud questions in the rainbow's end,
And hurried answers, and a sound of spears.
And through the yellow blaze I saw one bend
Down on a trembling white knee, and her tears
Fell down in globes of light, and her small
mouth
Was filled up with a name unspoken. Years
Of waiting love, and all their long, long drought
Of kisses parched her lips, and did she spend
Her eyes blue candles searching thro' her fears.
" She hath loved Ganymede, the stolen boy."
Said one, and then another, " Let us sing
To Zeus that he may give her living joy

Above Olympus, where the cool hill-spring
Of Lethe bubbles up to bathe the heart
Sorrow's lean fingers bruised. There eagles wing
To eyries in the stars, and when they part
Their broad dark wings a wind is born to buoy
The bee home heavy in the far evening."

HYMN TO ZEUS

"God, whose kindly hand doth sow
The rainbow showers on hill and lawn,
To make the young sweet grasses grow
And fill the udder of the fawn.
Whose light is life of leaf and flower,
And all the colours of the birds.
Whose song goes on from hour to hour

Upon the river's liquid words.
Reach out a golden beam of thine
And touch her pain. Your finger-tips
Do make the violets' blue eclipse
Like milk upon a daisy shine.

God, who lights the little stars,
And over night the white dew spills.
Whose hand doth move the season's cars
And clouds that mock our pointed hills.
Whose bounty fills the cow-trod wold,
And fills with bread the warm brown sod.
Who brings us sleep, where we grow old
'Til sleep and age together nod.

Reach out a beam and touch the pain
A heart has oozed thro' all the years.

Your pity dries the morning's tears
And fills the world with joy again!"
The rainbow's lights were shut, and all the
maids
Stood round the sad nymph in a snow-white
ring,
She rising spoke, "A blue and soft light
bathes
Me to the fingers. Lo, I upward swing!"
And round her fell a mantle of blue light.
"Watch for me on the forehead of evening."
And lifting beautiful went out of sight.
And all the flowers flowed backward from the
glades,
An ebb of colours redolent of Spring.

Beauty and Love are sisters of the heart,

Love has no voice, and Beauty whispered song.
Now in my own, drawn silently apart
Love looked, and Beauty sang. I felt a strong
Pulse on my wrist, a feeling like a pain
In my quick heart, for Love with gazes long
Was worshipping at Artemis, now lain
Among the heaving flowers . . . I longed to dart
And fold her to my breast, nor saw the wrong.
She lay there, a tall beauty by her spear,
Her kirtle falling to her soft round knee.
Her hair was like the day when evening's near,
And her moist mouth might tempt the golden bee.
Smile's creases ran from dimples pink and deep,
And when she raised her arms I loved to see

The white mounds of her muscles. Gentle
sleep
Threatened her far blue looks. The noisy
weir
Fell into a low murmuring lullaby.
And then the flowers came back behind the
heel
Of hunted Io: she, poor maid, had fear
Wide in her eyes looking half back to steal
A glimpse of the loud gadfly fiercely near.
In her right hand she held a slanting light,
And in her left her train. Artemis here
Raised herself on her palms, and took a white
Horn from her side and blew a silver peal
'Til three hounds from the coppice did appear.

The white nine left the spaces of flowers, and
now

Went calling thro' the woods the hunter's call.
Young echoes sleeping in the hollow bough
Took up the shouts and handed them to all
Their sisters of the crags, 'til all the day
Was filled with voices loud and musical.
I followed them across a tangled way
'Til the red deer broke out and took the brow
Of a wide hill in bounces like a ball.
Besides swift Artemis I joined the chase;
We roused up kine and scattered fleecy flocks;
Crossed at a mill a swift and bubbly race;
Scaled in a wood of pine the knotty rocks;
Past a grey vision of a valley town;
Past swains at labour in their coloured frocks;
Once saw a boar upon a windy down;
Once heard a cradle in a lonely place,
And saw the red flash of a frightened fox.

We passed a garden where three maids in blue
Were talking of a queen a long time dead.
We caught a green glimpse of the sea: then thro'
A town all hills; now round a wood we sped
And killed our quarry in his native lair.
Then Artemis spun round to me and said,
"When come you?" and I took her long damp hair
And made a ball of it, and said, "Where you
Are midnight's dreams of love." She dropped her head,
No word she spoke, but, panting in her side,
I heard her heart. The trees were all at peace,
And lifting slowly on the grey evetide
A large and lovely star. Then to release
Her hair, my hand dropped to her girded waist

And lay there shyly. "O my love, the lease
Of your existence is for ever: taste
No less with me the love of earth," I cried.
"Thought for so short a while on lands and seas
Our mortal hearts know beauty, and overblow,
And we are dust upon some passing wind,
Dust and a memory. But for you the snow
That so long cloaks the mountains to the knees
Is no more than a morning. It doth go
And summer comes, and leaf upon the trees:
Still you are fair and young, and nothing find
In all man's story that seems long ago.
I have not loved on Earth the strife for gold,
Nor the great name that makes immortal man,
But all that struggle upward to behold

What still is left of Beauty undisgraced,
The snowdrop at the heel of winter cold
And shivering, and the wayward cuckoo chased
By lingering March, and, in the thunder's van
The poor lambs merry on the meagre wold,
By-ways and cast-off things that lie therein,
Old boots that trod the highways of the world,
The schoolboy's broken hoop, the battered bin
That heard the ragman's story, blackened places
Where gipsies camped and circuses made din,
Fast water and the melancholy traces
Of sea tides, and poor people madly whirled
Up, down, and through the black retreats of sin.

These things a god might love, and stooping
bless
With benedictions of eternal song.—
But I have not loved Artemis the less
For loving these, but deem it noble love
To sing of live or dead things in distress
And wake memorial memories above.

" Such is the soul that comes to plead with you
Oh, Artemis, to tend you in your needs.
At mornings I will bring you bells of dew
From honey places, and wild fish from streams
Flowing in secret places. I will brew
Sweet wine of alder for your evening dreams,
And pipe you music in the dusky reeds
When the four distances give up their blue.

And when the white procession of the stars
Crosses the night, and on their tattered wings,
Above the forest, cry the loud night-jars,
We'll hunt the stag upon the mountain-side,
Slipping like light between the shadow bars
'Til burst of dawn makes every distance wide.
Oh, Artemis — what grief the silence brings!
I hear the rolling chariot of Mars!"

A LITTLE BOY IN THE MORNING

He will not come, and still I wait.
He whistles at another gate
Where angels listen. Ah, I know
He will not come, yet if I go
How shall I know he did not pass
Barefooted in the flowery grass?

The moon leans on one silver horn
Above the silhouettes of morn,
And from their nest sills finches whistle
Or stooping pluck the downy thistle.
How is the morn so gay and fair
Without his whistling in its air?
The world is calling, I must go.
How shall I know he did not pass
Barefooted in the shining grass?

IN BARRACKS

TO A DISTANT ONE

THROUGH wild by-ways I come to you, my love,
Nor ask of those I meet the surest way,
What way I turn I cannot go astray
And miss you in my life. Though Fate may prove
A tardy guide she will not make delay
Leading me through strange seas and distant lands,
I'm coming still, though slowly, to your hands.
We'll meet one day.

There is so much to do, so little done,
In my life's space that I perforce did leave
Love at the moonlit trysting-place to grieve

Till fame and other little things were won.
I have missed much that I shall not retrieve,
Far will I wander yet with much to do.
Much will I spurn before I yet meet you,
So fair I can't deceive.

Your name is in the whisper of the woods
Like Beauty calling for a poet's song
To one whose harp had suffered many a wrong
In the lean hands of Pain. And when the broods
Of flower eyes waken all the streams along
In tender whiles, I feel most near to you: —
Oh, when we meet there shall be sun and blue
Strong as the spring is strong.

THE PLACE

Blossoms as old as May I scatter here,
And a blue wave I lifted from the stream.
It shall not know when winter days are drear
Or March is hoarse with blowing. But a-dream
The laurel boughs shall hold a canopy
Peacefully over it the winter long,
Till all the birds are back from oversea,
And April rainbows win a blackbird's song.

And when the war is over I shall take
My lute a-down to it and sing again
Songs of the whispering things amongst the brake,

And those I love shall know them by their strain.

Their airs shall be the blackbird's twilight song,

Their words shall be all flowers with fresh dews hoar.—

But it is lonely now in winter long.

And, God! to hear the blackbird sing once more.

MAY

She leans across an orchard gate somewhere,
Bending from out the shadows to the light,
A dappled spray of blossom in her hair
Studded with dew-drops lovely from the night.
She smiles to think how many hearts she'll
smite
With beauty ere her robes fade from the lawn.
She hears the robin's cymbals with delight,
The skylark in the rosebush of the dawn.

For her the cowslip rings its yellow bell,
For her the violets watch with wide blue eyes.
The wandering cuckoo doth its clear name tell
Thro' the white mist of blossoms where she lies

Painting a sunset for the western skies.
You'd know her by her smile and by her tear
And by the way the swift and martin flies,
Where she is south of these wild days and
drear.

TO EILISH OF THE FAIR HAIR

I'd make my heart a harp to play for you
Love songs within the evening dim of day,
Were it not dumb with ache and with mildew
Of sorrow withered like a flower away.
It hears so many calls from homeland places,
So many sighs from all it will remember,
From the pale roads and woodlands where your face is
Like laughing sunlight running thro' December.

But this it singeth loud above its pain,
To bring the greater ache: whate'er befall
The love that oft-times woke the sweeter strain

Shall turn to you always. And should you call
To pity it some day in those old places
Angels will covet the loud joy that fills it.
But thinking of the by-ways where your face is
Sunlight on other hearts — Ah! how it kills it.

IN CAMP

CREWBAWN

White clouds that change and pass,
And stars that shine awhile,
Dew water on the grass,
A fox upon a stile.

A river broad and deep,
A slow boat on the waves,
My sad thoughts on the sleep
That hollows out the graves.

EVENING IN ENGLAND

From its blue vase the rose of evening drops.
Upon the streams its petals float away.
The hills all blue with distance hide their tops
In the dim silence falling on the grey.
A little wind said "Hush!" and shook a spray
Heavy with May's white crop of opening bloom,
A silent bat went dipping up the gloom.

Night tells her rosary of stars full soon,
They drop from out her dark hand to her knees.
Upon a silhouette of woods the moon

Leans on one horn as if beseeching ease
From all her changes which have stirred the seas.
Across the ears of Toil Rest throws her veil,
I and a marsh bird only make a wail.

AT SEA

CROCKNAHARNA

On the heights of Crocknaharna,
(Oh, the lure of Crocknaharna)
On a morning fair and early
Of a dear remembered May,
There I heard a colleen singing
In the brown rocks and the grey.
She, the pearl of Crocknaharna,
Crocknaharna, Crocknaharna,
Wild with girls is Crocknaharna
Twenty hundred miles away.

On the heights of Crocknaharna,
(Oh, thy sorrow Crocknaharna)
On an evening dim and misty

Of a cold November day,
There I heard a woman weeping
In the brown rocks and the grey.
Oh, the pearl of Crocknaharna
(Crocknaharna, Crocknaharna),
Black with grief is Crocknaharna
Twenty hundred miles away.

IN THE MEDITERRANEAN — GOING TO THE WAR

Lovely wings of gold and green
Flit about the sounds I hear,
On my window when I lean
To the shadows cool and clear.

. . . .

Roaming, I am listening still,
Bending, listening overlong,
In my soul a steadier will,
In my heart a newer song.

THE GARDENER

Among the flowers, like flowers, her slow
hands move
Easing a muffled bell or stooping low
To help sweet roses climb the stakes above,
Where pansies stare and seem to whisper
"Lo!"
Like gaudy butterflies her sweet peas blow
Filling the garden with dim rustlings. Clear
On the sweet Book she reads how long ago
There was a garden to a woman dear.

She makes her life one grand beatitude
Of Love and Peace, and with contented eyes
She sees not in the whole world mean or rude,

And her small lot she trebly multiplies.

And when the darkness muffles up the skies

Still to be happy is her sole desire,

She sings sweet songs about a great emprise,

And sees a garden blowing in the fire.

IN SERBIA

AUTUMN EVENING IN SERBIA

All the thin shadows
Have closed on the grass,
With the drone on their dark wings
The night beetles pass.
Folded her eyelids,
A maiden asleep,
Day sees in her chamber
The pallid moon peep.

From the bend of the briar
The roses are torn,
And the folds of the wood tops
Are faded and worn.

A strange bird is singing
Sweet notes of the sun,
Tho' song time is over
And Autumn begun.

NOCTURNE

The rim of the moon
Is over the corn.
The beetle's drone
Is above the thorn.
Grey days come soon
And I am alone;
Can you hear my moan
Where you rest, Aroon?

When the wild tree bore
The deep blue cherry,
In night's deep hall

Our love kissed merry.

But you come no more

Where its woodlands call,

And the grey days fall

On my grief, Astore!

SPRING AND AUTUMN

Green ripples singing down the corn,
With blossoms dumb the path I tread,
And in the music of the morn
One with wild roses on her head.

Now the green ripples turn to gold
And all the paths are loud with rain,
I with desire am growing old
And full of winter pain.

IN GREECE

THE DEPARTURE OF PROSERPINE

Old mother Earth for me already grieves,
Her morns wake weeping and her noons are dim,
Silence has left her woods, and all the leaves
Dance in the windy shadows on the rim
Of the dull lake thro' which I soon shall pass
To my dark bridal bed
Down in the hollow chambers of the dead.
Will not the thunder hide me if I call,
Wrapt in the corner of some distant star
The gods have never known?
Alas! alas!
My voice has left with the last wing, my fall
Shall crush the flowery fields with gloom, as far

As swallows fly.

Would I might die

And in a solitude of roses lie

As the last bud's outblown.

Then nevermore Demeter would be heard

Wail in the blowing rain, but every shower

Would come bound up with rainbows to the birds

Wrapt in a dusty wing, and the dry flower

Hanging a shrivelled lip.

This weary change from light to darkness fills

My heart with twilight, and my brightest day

Dawns over thunder and in thunder spills

Its urn of gladness

With a sadness

Through which the slow dews drip

And the bat goes over on a thorny wing.

Is it a dream that once I used to sing
From Ægean shores across her rocky isles,
Making the bells of Babylon to ring
Over the wiles
That lifted me from darkness to the Spring?
And the King
Seeing his wine in blossom on the tree
Danced with the queen a merry roundelay,
And all the blue circumference of the day
Was loud with flying song.——
— But let me pass along:
What brooks it the unfree to thus delay?
No secret turning leads from the gods' way.

THE HOMECOMING OF THE SHEEP

The sheep are coming home in Greece,
Hark the bells on every hill!
Flock by flock, and fleece by fleece,
Wandering wide a little piece
Thro' the evening red and still,
Stopping where the pathways cease,
Cropping with a hurried will.

Thro' the cotton-bushes low
Merry boys with shouldered crooks
Close them in a single row,
Shout among them as they go
With one bell-ring o'er the brooks.

Such delight you never know
Reading it from gilded books.

Before the early stars are bright
Cormorants and sea-gulls call,
And the moon comes large and white
Filling with a lovely light
The ferny curtained waterfall.
Then sleep wraps every bell up tight
And the climbing moon grows small.

WHEN LOVE AND BEAUTY WANDER AWAY

When Love and Beauty wander away,
And there's no more hearts to be sought and
won,
When the old earth limps thro' the dreary day,
And the work of the Seasons cry undone:
Ah! what shall we do for a song to sing,
Who have known Beauty, and Love, and
Spring?

When Love and Beauty wander away,
And a pale fear lies on the cheeks of youth,
When there's no more goal to strive for and
pray,

And we live at the end of the world's untruth:
Ah! what shall we do for a heart to prove,
Who have known Beauty, and Spring, and
Love?

IN HOSPITAL IN EGYPT

MY MOTHER

God made my mother on an April day,
From sorrow and the mist along the sea,
Lost birds' and wanderers' songs and ocean spray,
And the moon loved her wandering jealously.

Beside the ocean's din she combed her hair,
Singing the nocturne of the passing ships,
Before her earthly lover found her there
And kissed away the music from her lips.

She came unto the hills and saw the change
That brings the swallow and the geese in turns.
But there was not a grief she deeméd strange,
For there is that in her which always mourns.

Kind heart she has for all on hill or wave
Whose hopes grew wings like ants to fly away.
I bless the God Who such a mother gave
This poor bird-hearted singer of a day.

SONG

NOTHING but sweet music wakes
My Beloved, my Beloved.
Sleeping by the blue lakes,
My own Beloved!

Song of lark and song of thrush,
My Beloved! my Beloved!
Sing in morning's rosy bush,
My own Beloved!

When your eyes dawn blue and clear,
My Beloved! my Beloved!
You will find me waiting here,
My own Beloved!

TO ONE DEAD

A BLACKBIRD singing
On a moss upholstered stone,
Bluebells swinging,
Shadows wildly blown,
A song in the wood,
A ship on the sea.
The song was for you
And the ship was for me.

A blackbird singing
I hear in my troubled mind,
Bluebells swinging
I see in a distant wind.

But sorrow and silence
Are the wood's threnody,
The silence for you
And the sorrow for me.

THE RESURRECTION

My true love still is all that's fair,
She is flower and blossom blowing free,
For all her silence lying there
She sings a spirit song to me.

New lovers seek her in her bower,
The rain, the dew, the flying wind,
And tempt her out to be a flower,
Which throws a shadow on my mind.

THE SHADOW PEOPLE

Old lame Bridget doesn't hear
Fairy music in the grass
When the gloaming's on the mere
And the shadow people pass:
Never hears their slow grey feet
Coming from the village street
Just beyond the parson's wall,
Where the clover globes are sweet
And the mushroom's parasol
Opens in the moonlit rain.
Every night I hear them call
From their long and merry train.
Old lame Bridget says to me,
"It is just your fancy, child."

She cannot believe I see
Laughing faces in the wild,
Hands that twinkle in the sedge
Bowing at the water's edge
Where the finny minnows quiver,
Shaping on a blue wave's ledge
Bubble foam to sail the river.
And the sunny hands to me
Beckon ever, beckon ever.
Oh! I would be wild and free
And with the shadow people be.

IN BARRACKS

AN OLD DESIRE

I SEARCHED thro' memory's lumber-room
And there I found an old desire,
I took it gently from the gloom
To cherish by my scanty fire.

And all the night a sweet-voiced one,
Sang of the place my loves abide,
'Til Earth leaned over from the dawn
And hid the last star in her side.

And often since, when most alone,
I ponder on my old desire,
But never hear the sweet-voiced one,
And there are ruins in my fire.

THOMAS McDONAGH

He shall not hear the bittern cry
In the wild sky, where he is lain,
Nor voices of the sweeter birds
Above the wailing of the rain.

Nor shall he know when loud March blows
Thro' slanting snows her fanfare shrill,
Blowing to flame the golden cup
Of many an upset daffodil.

But when the Dark Cow leaves the moor,
And pastures poor with greedy weeds,
Perhaps he'll hear her low at morn
Lifting her horn in pleasant meads.

THE WEDDING MORNING

Spread the feast, and let there be
Such music heard as best beseems
A king's son coming from the sea
To wed a maiden of the streams.

Poets, pale for long ago,
Bring sweet sounds from rock and flood,
You by echo's accent know
Where the water is and wood.

Harpers whom the moths of Time
Bent and wrinkled dusty brown,
Her chains are falling with a chime,
Sweet as bells in Heaven town.

But, harpers, leave your harps aside,
And, poets, leave awhile your dreams.
The storm has come upon the tide
And Cathleen weeps among her streams.

THE BLACKBIRDS

I HEARD the Poor Old Woman say:

"At break of day the fowler came,

And took my blackbirds from their songs

Who loved me well thro' shame and blame.

No more from lovely distances

Their songs shall bless me mile by mile,

Nor to white Ashbourne call me down

To wear my crown another while.

With bended flowers the angels mark

For the skylark the place they lie,

From there its little family

Shall dip their wings first in the sky.

And when the first surprise of flight
Sweet songs excite, from the far dawn
Shall there come blackbirds loud with love,
Sweet echoes of the singers gone.

But in the lonely hush of eve
Weeping I grieve the silent bills."
I heard the Poor Old Woman say
In Derry of the little hills.

THE LURE

I saw night leave her halos down
On Mitylene's dark mountain isle,
The silhouette of one fair town
Like broken shadows in a pile.
And in the farther dawn I heard
The music of a foreign bird.

In fields of shady angles now
I stand and dream in the half dark:
The thrush is on the blossomed bough,
Above the echoes sings the lark,
And little rivers drop between
Hills fairer than dark Mitylene.

Yet something calls me with no voice
And wakes sweet echoes in my mind;
In the fair country of my choice
Nor Peace nor Love again I find,
Nor anything of rest I know
When south-east winds are blowing low.

THRO' BOGAC BAN

I MET the Silent Wandering Man,
Thro' Bogac Ban he made his way,
Humming a slow old Irish tune,
On Joseph Plunkett's wedding day.

And all the little whispering things
That love the springs of Bogac Ban,
Spread some new rumour round the dark
And turned their faces from the dawn.

. . . . . .

My hand upon my harp I lay,
I cannot say what things I know;
To meet the Silent Wandering Man
Of Bogac Ban once more I go.

FATE

Lugh made a stir in the air
With his sword of cries,
And fairies thro' hidden ways
Came from the skies,
And their spells withered up the fair
And vanquished the wise.

And old lame Balor came down
With his gorgon eye
Hidden behind its lid,
Old, withered and dry.
He looked on the wattle town,
And the town passed by.

These things I know in my dreams,

The crying sword of Lugh,

And Balor's ancient eye

Searching me through,

Withering up my songs

And my pipe yet new.

EVENING CLOUDS

A LITTLE flock of clouds go down to rest
In some blue corner off the moon's highway,
With shepherd winds that shook them in the West
To borrowed shapes of earth, in bright array,
Perhaps to weave a rainbow's gay festoons
Around the lonesome isle which Brooke has made
A little England full of lovely noons,
Or dot it with his country's mountain shade.

Ah, little wanderers, when you reach that isle
Tell him, with dripping dew, they have not failed,

What he loved most; for late I roamed awhile
Thro' English fields and down her rivers
sailed;
And they remember him with beauty caught
From old desires of Oriental Spring
Heard in his heart with singing overwrought;
And still on Purley Common gooseboys sing.

SONG

THE winds are scented with woods after rain,
And a raindrop shines in the daisy's eye.
Shall we follow the swallow again, again,
Ah! little yearning thing, you and I?

You and I to the South again,
And heart! Oh, heart, how you shall sigh,
For the kind soft wind that follows the rain,
And the raindrop shed from the daisy's eye.

THE HERONS

As I was climbing Ardan Mor
From the shore of Sheelan lake,
I met the herons coming down
Before the water's wake.

And they were talking in their flight
Of dreamy ways the herons go
When all the hills are withered up
Nor any waters flow.

IN THE SHADOWS

The silent music of the flowers
Wind-mingled shall not fail to cheer
The lonely hours
When I no more am here.

Then in some shady willow place
Take up the book my heart has made,
And hide your face
Against my name which was a shade.

THE SHIPS OF ARCADY

THRO' the faintest filigree
Over the dim waters go
Little ships of Arcady
When the morning moon is low.

I can hear the sailors' song
From the blue edge of the sea,
Passing like the lights along
Thro' the dusky filigree.

Then where moon and waters meet
Sail by sail they pass away,
With little friendly winds replete
Blowing from the breaking day.

And when the little ships have flown,
Dreaming still of Arcady
I look across the waves, alone
In the misty filigree.

AFTER

And in the after silences
Of flower-lit distances I'll be,
And who would find me travels far
In lands unsung of minstrelsy.
Strong winds shall cross my secret way,
And planet mountains hide my goal,
I shall go on from pass to pass,
By monstrous rocks, a lonely soul.

TO ONE WEEPING

Maiden, these are sacred tears,
Let me not disturb your grief;
Had I but your bosom's fears
I should weep, nor seek relief.

My woe is a silent woe
'Til I give it measured rhyme,
When the blackbird's flute is low
In my heart at singing time.

A DREAM DANCE

Maeve held a ball on the dún,
Cuculain and Eimer were there,
In the light of an old broken moon
I was dancing with Deirdre the fair.

How loud was the laughter of Finn
As he blundered about thro' a reel,
Tripping up Caoilte the thin,
Or jostling the dreamy Aleel.

And when the dance ceased for a song,
How sweet was the singing of Fand,
We could hear her far, wandering along,
My hand in that beautiful hand.

BY FAUGHAN

For hills and woods and streams unsung
I pipe above a rippled cove.
And here the weaver autumn hung
Between the hills a wind she wove
From sounds the hills remember yet
Of purple days and violet.

The hills stand up to trip the sky,
Sea-misted, and along the tops
Wing after wing goes summer by,
And many a little roadway stops
And starts, and struggles to the sea,
Cutting them up in filigree.

Twixt wind and silence Faughan flows,
In music broken over rocks,
Like mingled bells the poet knows
Ring in the fields of Eastern flocks.
And here this song for you I find
Between the silence and the wind.

IN SEPTEMBER

STILL are the meadowlands, and still
Ripens the upland corn,
And over the brown gradual hill
The moon has dipped a horn.

The voices of the dear unknown
With silent hearts now call,
My rose of youth is overblown
And trembles to the fall.

My song forsakes me like the birds
That leave the rain and grey,
I hear the music of the words
My lute can never say.

LAST SONGS

TO AN OLD QUILL OF LORD DUNSANY'S

Before you leave my hands' abuses
To lie where many odd things meet you,
Neglected darkling of the Muses,
I, the last of singers, greet you.

Snug in some white wing they found you,
On the Common bleak and muddy,
Noisy goslings gobbling round you
In the pools of sunset, ruddy.

Have you sighed in wings untravelled
For the heights where others view the
Bluer widths of heaven, and marvelled
At the utmost top of Beauty?

No! it cannot be; the soul you
Sigh with craves nor begs of us.
From such heights a poet stole you
From a wing of Pegasus.

You have been where gods were sleeping
In the dawn of new creations,
Ere they woke to woman's weeping
At the broken thrones of nations.

You have seen this old world shattered
By old gods it disappointed,
Lying up in darkness, battered
By wild comets, unanointed.

But for Beauty unmolested
Have you still the sighing olden?
I know mountains healther-crested,
Waters white, and waters golden.

There I'd keep you, in the lowly
Beauty-haunts of bird and poet,
Sailing in a wing, the holy
Silences of lakes below it.

But I leave you by where no man
Finds you, when I too be gone
From the puddles on this common
Over the dark Rubicon.

Londonderry,
September 18th, 1916.

TO A SPARROW

Because you have no fear to mingle
Wings with those of greater part,
So like me, with song I single
Your sweet impudence of heart.

And when prouder feathers go where
Summer holds her leafy show,
You still come to us from nowhere
Like grey leaves across the snow.

In back ways where odd and end go
To your meals you drop down sure,
Knowing every broken window
Of the hospitable poor.

There is no bird half so harmless,

None so sweetly rude as you,

None so common and so charmless,

None of virtues nude as you.

But for all your faults I love you,

For you linger with us still,

Though the wintry winds reprove you

And the snow is on the hill.

Londonderry,

September 20th, 1916.

OLD CLO'

I WAS just coming in from the garden,
Or about to go fishing for eels,
And, smiling, I asked you to pardon
My boots very low at the heels.
And I thought that you never would go,
As you stood in the doorway ajar,
For my heart would keep saying, "Old Clo',
You're found out at last as you are."

I was almost ashamed to acknowledge
That I was the quarry you sought,
For was I not bred in a college
And reared in a mansion, you thought.

And now in the latest style cut
With fortune more kinder I go
To welcome you half-ways. Ah! but
I was nearer the gods when "Old Clo'."

YOUTH

She paved the way with perfume sweet
Of flowers that moved like winds alight,
And never weary grew my feet
Wandering through the spring's delight.

She dropped her sweet fife to her lips
And lured me with her melodies,
To where the great big wandering ships
Put out into the peaceful seas.

But when the year grew chill and brown,
And all the wings of Summer flown,
Within the tumult of a town
She left me to grow old alone.

THE LITTLE CHILDREN

Hunger points a bony finger
To the workhouse on the hill,
But the little children linger
While there's flowers to gather still
For my sunny window sill.

In my hands I take their faces,
Smiling to my smiles they run.
Would that I could take their places
Where the murky bye-ways shun
The benedictions of the sun.

How they laugh and sing returning
Lightly on their secret way.

While I listen in my yearning
Their laughter fills the windy day
With gladness, youth and May.

AUTUMN

Now leafy winds are blowing cold,
And South by West the sun goes down,
A quiet huddles up the fold
In sheltered corners of the brown.

Like scattered fire the wild fruit strews
The ground beneath the blowing tree,
And there the busy squirrel hews
His deep and secret granary.

And when the night comes starry clear,
The lonely quail complains beside
The glistening waters on the mere
Where widowed Beauties yet abide.

And I, too, make my own complaint
Upon a reed I plucked in June,
And love to hear it echoed faint
Upon another heart in tune.

Londonderry,
September 29th, 1916.

IRELAND

I CALLED you by sweet names by wood and
linn,
You answered not because my voice was new,
And you were listening for the hounds of Finn
And the long hosts of Lugh.

And so, I came unto a windy height
And cried my sorrow, but you heard no wind,
For you were listening to small ships in flight,
And the wail on hills behind.

And then I left you, wandering the war
Arméd with will, from distant goal to goal,
To find you at the last free as of yore,
Or die to save your soul.

And then you called to us from far and near
To bring your crown from out the deeps of
time,
It is my grief your voice I couldn't hear
In such a distant clime.

LADY FAIR

Lady fair, have we not met
In our lives elsewhere?
Darkling in my mind to-night
Faint fair faces dare
Memory's old unfaithfulness
To what was true and fair.
Long of memory is Regret,
But what Regret has taken flight
Through my memory's silences?
Lo! I turn it to the light.
'Twas but a pleasure in distress,
Too faint and far off for redress.
But some light glancing in your hair

And in the liquid of your eyes
Seem to murmur old good-byes
In our lives elsewhere.
Have we not met, Lady fair?

Londonderry,
October 27th, 1916.

AT A POET'S GRAVE

When I leave down this pipe my friend
And sleep with flower I loved, apart,
My songs shall rise in wilding things
Whose roots are in my heart.

And here where that sweet poet sleeps
I hear the songs he left unsung,
When winds are fluttering the flowers
And summer-bells are rung.

November, 1916.

AFTER COURT MARTIAL

My mind is not my mind, therefore
I take no heed of what men say,
I lived ten thousand years before
God cursed the town of Nineveh.

The Present is a dream I see
Of horror and loud sufferings,
At dawn a bird will waken me
Unto my place among the kings.

And though men called me a vile name,
And all my dream companions gone,
'Tis I the soldier bears the shame,
Not I the king of Babylon.

A MOTHER'S SONG

Little ships of whitest pearl
With sailors who were ancient kings,
Come over the sea when my little girl
Sings.

And if my little girl should weep,
Little ships with torn sails
Go headlong down among the deep
Whales.

November, 1916.

AT CURRABWEE

Every night at Currabwee
Little men with leather hats
Mend the boots of Faery
From the tough wings of the bats.
So my mother told to me,
And she is wise you will agree.

Louder than a cricket's wing
All night long their hammer's glee
Times the merry songs they sing
Of Ireland glorious and free.
So I heard Joseph Plunkett say,
You know he heard them but last May.

And when the night is very cold
They warm their hands against the light

Of stars that make the waters gold
Where they are labouring all the night.
So Pearse said, and he knew the truth,
Among the stars he spent his youth.

And I, myself, have often heard
Their singing as the stars went by,
For am I not of those who reared
The banner of old Ireland high,
From Dublin town to Turkey's shores,
And where the Vardar loudly roars?

December, 1916.

SONG-TIME IS OVER

I WILL come no more awhile,
Song-time is over.
A fire is burning in my heart,
I was ever a rover.

You will hear me no more awhile,
The birds are dumb,
And a voice in the distance calls
"Come," and "Come."

December 13th, 1916.

UNA BAWN

Una Bawn, the days are long,
And the seas I cross are wide,
I must go when Ireland needs,
And you must bide.

And should I not return to you
When the sails are on the tide,
'Tis you will find the days so long,
Una Bawn, and I must bide.

December 13th, 1916.

SPRING LOVE

I saw her coming through the flowery grass,
Round her swift ankles butterfly and bee
Blent loud and silent wings; I saw her pass
Where foam-bows shivered on the sunny sea.

Then came the swallow crowding up the dawn,
And cuckoo-echoes filled the dewy South.
I left my love upon the hill, alone,
My last kiss burning on her lovely mouth.

B.E.F.—*December 26th, 1916.*

SOLILOQUY

When I was young I had a care
Lest I should cheat me of my share
Of that which makes it sweet to strive
For life, and dying still survive,
A name in sunshine written higher
Than lark or poet dare aspire.

But I grew weary doing well,
Besides, 'twas sweeter in that hell,
Down with the loud banditti people
Who robbed the orchards, climbed the steeple
For jackdaws' eggs and made the cock
Crow ere 'twas daylight on the clock.
I was so very bad the neighbours
Spoke of me at their daily labours.

And now I'm drinking wine in France,
The helpless child of circumstance.
To-morrow will be loud with war,
How will I be accounted for?

It is too late now to retrieve
A fallen dream, too late to grieve
A name unmade, but not too late
To thank the gods for what is great;
A keen-edged sword, a soldier's heart,
Is greater than a poet's art.
And greater than a poet's fame
A little grave that has no name.

DAWN

Quiet miles of golden sky,
And in my heart a sudden flower.
I want to clap my hands and cry
For Beauty in her secret bower.

Quiet golden miles of dawn —
Smiling all the East along;
And in my heart night fully blown,
A little rose-bud of a song.

CEOL SIDHE [1]

When May is here, and every morn
Is dappled with pied bells,
And dewdrops glance along the thorn
And wings flash in the dells,
I take my pipe and play a tune
Of dreams, a whispered melody,
For feet that dance beneath the moon
In fairy jollity.

And when the pastoral hills are grey
And the dim stars are spread,
A scamper fills the grass like play
Of feet where fairies tread.

[1] Fairy music.

And many a little whispering thing

Is calling to the Shee.

The dewy bells of evening ring,

And all is melody.

France,

December 29th, 1916.

THE RUSHES

The rushes nod by the river
As the winds on the loud waves go,
And the things they nod of are many,
For it's many the secret they know.

And I think they are wise as the fairies
Who lived ere the hills were high,
They nod so grave by the river
To everyone passing by.

If they would tell me their secrets
I would go by a hidden way,
To the rath when the moon retiring
Dips dim horns into the gray.

And a fairy-girl out of Leinster
In a long dance I should meet,
My heart to her heart beating,
My feet in rhyme with her feet.

France,
January 6th, 1917.

THE DEAD KINGS

All the dead kings came to me
At Rosnaree, where I was dreaming.
A few stars glimmered through the morn,
And down the thorn the dews were streaming.

And every dead king had a story
Of ancient glory, sweetly told.
It was too early for the lark,
But the starry dark had tints of gold.

I listened to the sorrows three
Of that Eirë passed into song.
A cock crowed near a hazel croft,
And up aloft dim larks winged strong.

And I, too, told the kings a story
Of later glory, her fourth sorrow:
There was a sound like moving shields
In high green fields and the lowland furrow.

And one said: "We who yet are kings
Have heard these things lamenting inly."
Sweet music flowed from many a bill
And on the hill the morn stood queenly.

And one said: "Over is the singing,
And bell bough ringing, whence we come;
With heavy hearts we'll tread the shadows,
In honey meadows birds are dumb."

And one said: "Since the poets perished
And all they cherished in the way,
Their thoughts unsung, like petal showers
Inflame the hours of blue and gray."

And one said: "A loud tramp of men
We'll hear again at Rosnaree."
A bomb burst near me where I lay.
I woke, 'twas day in Picardy.

France,
January 7th, 1917.

IN FRANCE

The silence of maternal hills
Is round me in my evening dreams;
And round me music-making bills
And mingling waves of pastoral streams.

Whatever way I turn I find
The path is old unto me still.
The hills of home are in my mind,
And there I wander as I will.

February 3rd, 1917.

HAD I A GOLDEN POUND

(AFTER THE IRISH)

HAD I a golden pound to spend,
My love should mend and sew no more.
And I would buy her a little quern,
Easy to turn on the kitchen floor.

And for her windows curtains white,
With birds in flight and flowers in bloom,
To face with pride the road to town,
And mellow down her sunlit room.

And with the silver change we'd prove
The truth of Love to life's own end,
With hearts the years could but embolden,
Had I a golden pound to spend.

February 5th, 1917.

FAIRIES

Maiden-Poet, come with me
To the heaped up cairn of Maeve,
And there we'll dance a fairy dance
Upon a fairy's grave.

In and out among the trees,
Filling all the night with sound,
The morning, strung upon her star,
Shall chase us round and round.

What are we but fairies too,
Living but in dreams alone,
Or, at the most, but children still,
Innocent and overgrown?

February 6th, 1917.

IN A CAFÉ

Kiss the maid and pass her round,
Lips like hers were made for many.
Our loves are far from us to-night,
But these red lips are sweet as any.

Let no empty glass be seen
Aloof from our good table's sparkle,
At the acme of our cheer
Here are francs to keep the circle.

They are far who miss us most —
Sip and kiss — how well we love them,
Battling through the world to keep
Their hearts at peace, their God above them.

February 11th, 1917.

SPRING

Once more the lark with song and speed
Cleaves through the dawn, his hurried bars
Fall, like the flute of Ganymede
Twirling and whistling from the stars.

The primrose and the daffodil
Surprise the valleys, and wild thyme
Is sweet on every little hill,
When lambs come down at folding time.

In every wild place now is heard
The magpie's noisy house, and through
The mingled tunes of many a bird
The ruffled wood-dove's gentle coo.

Sweet by the river's noisy brink
The water-lily bursts her crown,
The kingfisher comes down to drink
Like rainbow jewels falling down.

And when the blue and grey entwine
The daisy shuts her golden eye,
And peace wraps all those hills of mine
Safe in my dearest memory.

France,
March 8th, 1917.

PAN

He knows the safe ways and unsafe
And he will lead the lambs to fold,
Gathering them with his merry pipe,
The gentle and the overbold.

He counts them over one by one,
And leads them back by cliff and steep,
To grassy hills where dawn is wide,
And they may run and skip and leap.

And just because he loves the lambs
He settles them for rest at noon,
And plays them on his oaten pipe
The very wonder of a tune.

France,
March 11th, 1917.

WITH FLOWERS

These have more language than my song,
Take them and let them speak for me.
I whispered them a secret thing
Down the green lanes of Allary.

You shall remember quiet ways
Watching them fade, and quiet eyes,
And two hearts given up to love,
A foolish and an overwise.

France,
April, 1917.

THE FIND

I took a reed and blew a tune,
And sweet it was and very clear
To be about a little thing
That only few hold dear.

Three times the cuckoo named himself,
But nothing heard him on the hill,
Where I was piping like an elf
The air was very still.

'Twas all about a little thing
I made a mystery of sound,
I found it in a fairy ring
Upon a fairy mound.

June 2nd, 1917.

A FAIRY HUNT

Who would hear the fairy horn
Calling all the hounds of Finn
Must be in a lark's nest born
When the moon is very thin.

I who have the gift can hear
Hounds and horn and tally ho,
And the tongue of Bran as clear
As Christmas bells across the snow.

And beside my secret place
Hurries by the fairy fox,
With the moonrise on his face,
Up and down the mossy rocks.

Then the music of a horn
And the flash of scarlet men,
Thick as poppies in the corn
All across the dusky glen.

Oh! the mad delight of chase!
Oh! the shouting and the cheer!
Many an owl doth leave his place
In the dusty tree to hear.

TO ONE WHO COMES NOW AND THEN

When you come in, it seems a brighter fire
Crackles upon the hearth invitingly,
The household routine which was wont to tire
Grows full of novelty.

You sit upon our home-upholstered chair
And talk of matters wonderful and strange,
Of books, and travel, customs old which dare
The gods of Time and Change.

Till we with inner word our care refute
Laughing that this our bosoms yet assails,
While there are maidens dancing to a flute
In Andalusian vales.

And sometimes from my shelf of poems you take
And secret meanings to our hearts disclose,
As when the winds of June the mid bush shake
We see the hidden rose.

And when the shadows muster, and each tree
A moment flutters, full of shutting wings,
You take the fiddle and mysteriously
Wake wonders on the strings.

And in my garden, grey with misty flowers,
Low echoes fainter than a beetle's horn
Fill all the corners with it, like sweet showers
Of bells, in the owl's morn.

Come often, friend, with welcome and surprise
We'll greet you from the sea or from the
town;
Come when you like and from whatever skies
Above you smile or frown.

Belgium,
July 22nd, 1917.

THE SYLPH

I saw you and I named a flower
That lights with blue a woodland space,
I named a bird of the red hour
And a hidden fairy place.

And then I saw you not, and knew
Dead leaves were whirling down the mist,
And something lost was crying through
An evening of amethyst.

HOME

A BURST of sudden wings at dawn,
Faint voices in a dreamy noon,
Evenings of mist and murmurings,
And nights with rainbows of the moon.

And through these things a wood-way dim,
And waters dim, and slow sheep seen
On uphill paths that wind away
Through summer sounds and harvest green.

This is a song a robin sang
This morning on a broken tree,
It was about the little fields
That call across the world to me.

Belgium,
July, 1917.

THE LANAWN SHEE

Powdered and perfumed the full bee
Winged heavily across the clover,
And where the hills were dim with dew,
Purple and blue the west leaned over.

A willow spray dipped in the stream,
Moving a gleam of silver ringing,
And by a finny creek a maid
Filled all the shade with softest singing.

Listening, my heart and soul at strife,
On the edge of life I seemed to hover,
For I knew my love had come at last,
That my joy was past and my gladness over.

I tiptoed gently up and stooped
Above her looped and shining tresses,
And asked her of her kin and name,
And why she came from fairy places.

She told me of a sunny coast
Beyond the most adventurous sailor,
Where she had spent a thousand years
Out of the fears that now assail her.

And there, she told me, honey drops
Out of the tops of ash and willow,
And in the mellow shadow Sleep
Doth sweetly keep her poppy pillow.

Nor Autumn with her brown line marks
The time of larks, the length of roses,
But song-time there is over never
Nor flower-time ever, ever closes.

And wildly through uncurling ferns
Fast water turns down valleys singing,
Filling with scented winds the dales,
Setting the bells of sleep a-ringing.

And when the thin moon lowly sinks,
Through cloudy chinks a silver glory
Lingers upon the left of night
Till dawn delights the meadows hoary.

And by the lakes the skies are white,
(Oh, the delight!) when swans are coming,
Among the flowers sweet joy-bells peal,
And quick bees wheel in drowsy humming.

The squirrel leaves her dusty house
And in the boughs makes fearless gambol,
And, falling down in fire-drops, red,
The fruit is shed from every bramble.

Then, gathered all about the trees
Glad galaxies of youth are dancing,
Treading the perfume of the flowers,
Filling the hours with mazy glancing.

And when the dance is done, the trees
Are left to Peace and the brown woodpecker,
And on the western slopes of sky
The day's blue eye begins to flicker.

But at the sighing of the leaves,
When all earth grieves for lights departed
An ancient and a sad desire
Steals in to tire the human-hearted.

No fairy aid can save them now
Nor turn their prow upon the ocean,
The hundred years that missed each heart
Above them start their wheels in motion.

And so our loves are lost, she sighed,
And far and wide we seek new treasure,
For who on Time or Timeless hills
Can live the ills of loveless leisure?

("Fairer than Usna's youngest son,
O, my poor one, what flower-bed holds you?
Or, wrecked upon the shores of home,
What wave of foam with white enfolds you?

"You rode with kings on hills of green,
And lovely queens have served you banquet,
Sweet wine from berries bruised they brought
And shyly sought the lips which drank it.

"But in your dim grave of the sea
There shall not be a friend to love you.
And ever heedless of your loss
The earth ships cross the storms above you.

" And still the chase goes on, and still
The wine shall spill, and vacant places
Be given over to the new
As love untrue keeps changing faces.

" And I must wander with my song
Far from the young till Love returning,
Brings me the beautiful reward
Of some heart stirred by my long yearning.")

Friend, have you heard a bird lament
When sleet is sent for April weather?
As beautiful she told her grief,
As down through leaf and flower I led her.

And friend, could I remain unstirred
Without a word for such a sorrow?
Say, can the lark forget the cloud
When poppies shroud the seeded furrow?

Like a poor widow whose late grief
Seeks for relief in lonely byeways,
The moon, companionless and dim,
Took her dull rim through starless highways.

I was too weak with dreams to feel
Enchantment steal with guilt upon me,
She slipped, a flower upon the wind,
And laughed to find how she had won me.

From hill to hill, from land to land,
Her lovely hand is beckoning for me,
I follow on through dangerous zones,
Cross dead men's bones and oceans stormy.

Some day I know she'll wait at last
And lock me fast in white embraces,
And down mysterious ways of love
We two shall move to fairy places.

Belgium,
July, 1917.

COMPLETE POEMS OF FRANCIS LE
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